

Spirit Creek Safe-Keeping
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by

Grandmother Sitting Hawk sat resting into the big spreading buckeye tree by the little creek in the high grass plain. Children gathered around her, eager for the evening story she gave to them each day. "I hear the first cricket, Grandmother Sitting Hawk. You can start the story now," said the boy holding a forked stick. "Yes, I hear Sister Cricket, too." The elder answered. "She says her story telling time has begun. So let us too, begin our story."

"Where does Spirit Creek flow from?"

Grandmother Sitting Hawk asked.

"From the heart of Mother Earth," said the girl rolling a stone in her hands.

"Where does Spirit Creek flow to?" Grandmother asked.

Different children gave different answers.

Grandmother Sitting Hawk gave the same answer each time.

"To the hills", "Yes, and where else?"

"To the grass", "Yes, and where else?"

"To the river", "Yes, and where else?"

"To the ocean."

"Yes, Spirit Creek carries water to all these places.

And all who move about, the two-leggeds, the four-leggeds, the winged ones, the crawlers, all come to brother creek for water. Just as we weave baskets for carrying all things, Mother Earth weaves creek beds to bring everything together.

This makes Spirit Creek the sacred meeting place of all our relations in this land."

Grandmother Sitting Hawk lifted her chin a little and turned her head slowly, looking far into the distance. Golden plains of grass stretched out to the south and gentle wooded hills rose up in the east and north. She looked just like a hawk, with her body still and her head slowly turning with clear attention.

“The white-skin people are coming to our land. First they came like a little creek, but now they are coming like a heavy rains river. They have sat with us in circle and we welcomed them as brothers and sisters. Now we hear that near and far, some of the white-skin people are not respecting other people or Mother Nature. They are causing great destruction of Life on this land.”

Grandmother Sitting Hawk returned her gaze to the circle of children. She made fists and pushed her hands into each other, back and forth. “These others have different ways from us and they are trying to force us to be like them.” She pulled one hand free from the fist fight and offered it to the children, palm up. “We cannot be what we are not.” She placed both palms softly over her heart. “We can only be the Love that Great Spirit gave us to be. We are here to share our Love with all our relations in the sacred way. This we remember.” “This we remember.” The children repeated after her.

“Tomorrow we will have a ceremony, a new ceremony,” said Grandmother Sitting Hawk. “Red-Tailed Hawk came in my dreams last night and showed me what we must do to protect our treasures for future generations. We will sing them

into the heart of Spirit Creek for safe-keeping. Our treasures will stay there until the time comes that beings who can tend them are ready to listen.”

“In this dream Red-Tailed Hawk sat high in Elder Oak by the wellspring. She flew off into great arcs along the length of Spirit Creek, calling all our relations. A great circle came together beneath Elder Oak. Winged and earthbound insects, furry four-leggeds, great and small stones, plants and birds all came. There was dand the boy Red Dawn and his parents were there. Red-Tailed Hawk made her piercing cry. The circle became silent. She spoke. “In my travels I see a wave of destruction coming in this direction. We must give our treasures over to Spirit Creek for safe-keeping for future generations. Someday, many moons into the unknown, our treasures will be found by beings who will restore them. How do we carry out this big work? We will make ceremony today. We will pass the talking stick and each of us will sing our heart song. After each one has sung, the two-leggeds: Grandmother Sitting Hawk, the mother, the father and the child, will weave a single song from all our voices. They will teach us the song and together we will sing it deep into the heart of Spirit Creek.”

Grandmother Sitting Hawk continued her story. The children were wrapped around each other like twigs in a nest, listening closely. “Red-Tailed Hawk began to sing. When she was done she passed the talking stick to the sedge grass on her left. And so the talking stick and the songs moved sun-wise around the circle. Just as Red-Tailed Hawk had instructed, we four people wove a single

song from everyone's heart songs and taught it to the circle. We sang it over and over, singing our treasures deep into the heart of Spirit Creek for safe-keeping."

Grandmother Sitting Hawk took a deep breath and slowly let it out. The children followed her, taking long breaths in and out. "This I remember." she said. "Tomorrow we will sit in circle with our whole village at the wellspring's Elder Oak. We will make this ceremony Red-Tailed Hawk has given us. Spirit Creek will keep our treasures safe, deep in her heart, for future generations. Let us be still now. Listen to the crickets, watch the stars emerge and feel our hearts."